

MEDIA RELEASE

McAlester Army Ammunition Plant

POC: Mark Hughes, 918-685-0021 (cell)

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Ammunition plant hosts fire fighter training for 90 communities

MCALESTER, Okla.--Almost 400 fire fighters from 90 communities gathered at the 8th Annual Wildland Roundup Course Feb 29 – March 3 at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant. The course was sponsored by the Oklahoma State University's Fire Training Service division.

The 12 courses taught covered a wide variety of fire fighter issues from water shuttle operations and arson investigation to helicopter water delivery and emergency vehicle driver training.

Mike Mann, from the Pryor, Okla., fire department, was working at establishing a fire break line when he noted how timely the training was because "Pryor, right now, is out on a big grass fire as is Coweta." He noted that the course is a "great skills training" opportunity and plans on returning next year.

This is the eighth year that Oklahoma State University fire training service and the ammunition plant has teamed up. During this long-term partnership more than 2,000 fire fighters have been trained.

Don Capps, McAlester Army Ammunition Plant fire chief, said that without the cooperation of the local volunteer fire departments who bring equipment with them, this training would not be as successful.



Water tanker operations—Jered Weeks, Bugtussle volunteer fire fighter, steadies a hose while fellow fire fighters fill a water tanker belonging to the Higgins, Okla., fire department. The object of the course was for water tanker trucks to provide a continuous supply of water to a pumper truck 1 ½ miles away without allowing the pumper truck to go dry. (U.S. Army photo by Mark Hughes)

"For the water tanker shuttle training the municipalities of Higgins, Kiowa and Haywood-Arpear brought tanker trucks (to haul water) and Savanna, the ammunition plant and Oklahoma State University brought pumper trucks and all attendees get to use

them,” Capps explained. The pumper and tanker trucks varied in carrying capacity, from 1,800 to 5,000 gallons of water.

“The object of the tanker shuttle training is to pump 250-gallons of water per minute for one hour supplied only by water drawn by the tanker trucks at Brown Lake 1 ½ miles away. Each tanker had to make about 10 trips to Brown Lake to ensure the pumper truck didn’t run out of water,” Capps said.



. Team work--Firefighters practice their skills at team work in order to put out a “controlled-burn fire” during the 8th Annual Wildland Roundup Course held Feb. 29 – March 2 at the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant. About 400 fire fighters from 90 communities participated in the event which was sponsored by the Oklahoma State University Fire Service Training division. (U.S. Army photo by Mark Hughes)

Jered Weeks, Bugtussle volunteer fire fighter agrees. “This is my fourth year here and it is phenomenal what they do to help train the fire fighters here. This class (water shuttle operations) is a great help,” he said.

Retired fire chief Bob Noll of Yukon, Okla. who was the water shuttle operations instructor, echoed that sentiment. “The ammunition plant is a wonderful venue for this training. I’ve been here seven of the eight years this program has been in existence and it keeps getting better and better,” he said.

Even the Oklahoma Air National Guard got involved.

For the first time a Blackhawk helicopter, from “B” Company, 2nd of the 285th stationed out of Tulsa, settled down into a wide open field at the ammunition plant. SSG Richard Dennis, crew chief, gave a class on how to request air support through the Oklahoma Department of

This is an important training session, he emphasized, because rural communities don’t have fire hydrants and the trainees have to learn to transport enough water from a water source to the fire before the pumper runs out of water.

“Rural fire departments receiving this accreditation helps to lower insurance rates in their communities,” Capps explained. “And without these communities providing their equipment, we couldn’t provide this vital training,” he said.



Helicopter briefing—SSG Richard Dennis, crew chief from “B” Co, 2nd of the 285th out of Tulsa, briefs some of the 400 firefighters from 90 communities who attend the Feb. 29 – March 2 course at McAlester Army Ammunition Plant. The course was sponsored by Oklahoma State University Fire Service Training division. (U.S. Army photo by Mark Hughes)

Agriculture. He also provided procedures, policies and safety guidelines on how to work around a helicopter.

At the end of the class a 700-gallon bag was attached to the Blackhawk which was used to scoop water from Brown Lake and dumped on a controlled fire set for this specific demonstration.

Haywood-Arpelar volunteer firefighter Richard Shropshire said this is his seventh year attending the classes and they “get better and better. I recommend this to every fire department in the state. This training ought to be required for every fire department,” he said.



Water drop—An Oklahoma Air National Guard Blackhawk departs from McAlester Army Ammunition Plant's (MCAAP) Brown Lake after filling its 700-gallon basket full of water to be used at a controlled burn on the plant. The helicopter training was part of the 8th Annual Wildland Roundup Course held at MCAAP Feb. 29 – March 2. The course

Communities represented at the training

were: Adair, Antlers, Ardmore, Ash Creek, Ashland, Atoka, Bethel Acres, Blanchard, Bluff, Brent, Bridge Creek, Broken Bow, Bugtussle, Butler, Calera, Canadian Shores, Caney, Carney, Cedar Blue, Centralia, Choctaw, Clinton, Cole, Coleman, Crowder, Cyril, Daisy, Diamond

Head/Lone Chapel, Drumwright, Gideon, Glencoe, Gooseneck Bend, Grant, Green Country, Haileyville, Harmony, Hawley, Hawyood/Arpelar, Hickory Hills, Hochatown, Ingalls, Jay, Kansas (OK), Keefton, Kemp, Kildare, Kiowa, Lamar, Leach, Leon, Liberty,

McAlester, Milfay, Monkey Island, Murray Spur, Mustang, Nescatunga, Newcastle, Noble, Oaks, Okarche, Onapa, Osage Hills, Perkins, Porter, Porum Landing, Post Mountain, Praque, Pryor, Quinton, Rattan, Sam's Point, Savanna, Slaughterville, Spring Valley, Stone Bluff, Strang, Swoda, Tannehill/Scipio Lake Area, Tecumseh, The Village, Turley, US War Veterans Colony, Wewoka, Wilburton and Yukon.

Organizations participating are: Council on Firefighter Training, Fire Service Training, Oklahoma Fire Chiefs Association. Oklahoma State Fire Marshall Agency, the Oklahoma Forestry Service and U.S. Foam Technologies.